ITC backs ASML

The US International Trade Commission (Commission), based in Washington D.C., has ruled in favour of ASML on all claims filed by Japan's Nikon Corporation. The Commission refused Nikon's petition seeking review of the initial determination by an administrative law judge on January 29, 2003. The Commission had determined that ASML had not violated Section 337 of US trade law, governing unfair practices in import trade.

Doug Dunn, president and CEO of ASML said: "The Commission has completed a thorough and far-reaching examination of these claims and, at three different times, offered conclusions that wholly and consistently support ASML."

Germane to Air Products

Air Products has added production of germane (GeH_4) and related mixes for shipment via cylinders to enhance its supply chain capabilities. The germane can be expected to have verifiable consistency, or grade level, with every order due to packaging and cylinder preparation. Germane is used in SiGe manufacture.

Michael Hilton, Air Products' VP for electronic gases, equipment and services said: "We believe this product will see major demand in the coming months and years and through this new capability, we are positioned to help our customers take advantage of that projected growth."

Industry experts have forecast sales of wireless and digital semiconductor devices made with SiGe to hit $1.6bn by 2007. Sales for similar devices peaked out around $220m in 2002. SiGe devices can be processed on the same tool sets that are used for high volume silicon processing, minimising capital outlay for new SiGe chip production.

NTT-AT takes Thomas Swan's CCS 19x2" system platform

NTT Advanced Technology Corporation (NTT-AT) has purchased Thomas Swan Scientific Equipment's (TSSE) high volume multi-wafer "Close Coupled Showerhead" (CCS) MOCVD system.

The CCS system is to be used in the research and development of InP related material products by New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organisation (NEDO) in Japan.

Dr. Gako Araki of NTT-AT said: "The proven process scalability of TSSE CCS technology enables us to gain benefit from the comprehensive expertise we have in R&D by taking rapidly a process from R&D to manufacture with confidence."

Dr. Neil Gerrard of TSSE remarked: "Both TSSE and Marubun, our Japanese partner, are delighted to have been awarded our first order from NTT-AT and both organisations are looking to supporting and developing the relationship further."

Veeco's MBE system

Veeco Instruments Inc, has received an order for a 7x6 inch wafer GEN2000 MBE system. The order was made by an undisclosed US RFIC manufacturer and was the second since the beginning of the year.

"This second order in two months reflects the growing strength in the wireless telecom market," said Marlin Braun, GM Veeco MBE group.

"We're pleased that customers are selecting Veeco's high-volume MBE production systems for their capacity buys," he added.

New FEG SEM

FEI Company has launched its new Quanta environmental scanning electron microscope (ESEM) with field emission gun (FEG) technology. It offers high-resolution, non-charging imaging with high and stable beam current, making it an advanced analytical tool for a wide range of applications including material and life science, automotive metallurgy, and pharmaceutical studies. With its ability to image without charging samples, the Quanta FEG is suited for analysis of low-k dielectrics in semiconductors and is an enabling technology for any analysis of advanced photomasks. Jay Lindquist, FEI's senior VP of corporate marketing and strategic development said ESEM is the first of several technology advances FEI will introduce this year.

Patented ESEM technology enables dynamic wetting, heating, tensile and compression experiments that can be recorded with digital video to ensure no loss of data. It features three imaging modes — high and low vacuum and ESEM. Switching between vacuum modes is seamless and good imaging resolution is maintained in all vacuum modes.